A LETTER *from Monſieur* Pett——m *to Monſieur* B——ys.

Faithfully Tranſlated from the French *Original.*

SIR,

I Have been once more at *Gertruydenberg*, and us'd my beſt Endeavours to prevail with the *Miniſters of* France to explain themſelves upon the Security their Maſter was willing to give for evacuating the *Spaniſh Monarchy*, and to ſhew them the abſolute neceſſity they were under, after ſo many affected Delays, to ſpeak very plain, in order to bring the Negotiations to a ſpeedy Iſſue.

But I found that gaining of time was their chief Point, and every Pretence of Delay contributed, in their Opinions, to the Intereſt of their Maſter.

This indeed ſurpris'd me very much, and ſeem'd ſo contrary to all good Policy, that I could not forbear arguing this matter with them; and endeavour'd to demonſtrate from their own low Circumſtances, and the more happy Condition of the *Allies*, that the deferring of the Peace muſt, in all human probability, tend to the Diſadvantage of *France*.

And this I thought could be no difficult Task to convince them of, by ſhowing, that the Affairs of the *Allies* were ſtill in the ſame, or, comparatively ſpeaking, in a more flouriſhing Condition, than at the time of ſetling the *Preliminaries*: That their Arms were every where victorious: That they had *the ſame Generals, veſted with the ſame Power, Intereſt and Authority*: That they were now penetrating into the very heart of *France*; *Douay* was taken: That whatever Place they ſhould next think fit to ſet down before, muſt fall of courſe; and it was moſt evident, that nothing in *Flanders* could withſtand *the Duke of* Marlborough *and the Prince of* Savoy; which made all the World wonder, *why the King of* France *would not make a Peace, when he could no longer make War.*

I further urg'd the Unanimity of all *the Allies*, and the little hopes that were to be conceiv'd of gaining any Advantage, by dividing them among themſelves.

I repreſented to them that *England* was not only able, but ſtill determin'd to carry on the War, till they could obtain a laſting and honourable Peace, as the only means to preſerve their preſent Government and Conſtitution, and *to defeat the Hopes of the Pretender. That the ſame Parliament was ſtill in being*, that had given Twelve Millions to carry on the War, the moſt effectual and early Supplies that had ever been given: *That the ſame Miniſters were ſtill at the Helm, who had conducted their Affairs thro this long and expenſive War, and preſerv'd the Publick Credit beyond Example.* And that notwithſtanding the removal of the *Earl of* Sunderland, *the Q*— had publickly declar'd and promis'd, *She would make no farther Alterations in her Miniſtry.*——

Here they interrupted me, and ſaid, Indeed if all that I had ſaid was true, the Meaſures that *France* was taking would ſeem very unaccountable; but they could not believe me ſo ignorant of what was doing in *England*, as not to think that *France* had good reaſon to change her Stile, and expect a Peace upon far better Terms, than could be hop'd for, or even thought of laſt year: and they believ'd I would be of the ſame Opinion, when I ſaw *the* Engliſh *General diſgrac'd, or ſo mortify'd that he could no longer ſerve; the Miniſtry diſcarded, and the Parliament diſſolv'd.*

They obſerv'd that I was very much ſtartled at theſe Notions, and entertain'd them as utter Impoſſibilities; upon which they told me in ſhort, *That theſe Meaſures were already concerted betwixt* France, *and her Friends in* England.

I was ſtill more ſurpris'd, and beg'd a farther Explanation; upon which, with the uſual Freedom and Confidence that they have always treated me, they ſaid, It was true indeed that *Q*— *A*— had declar'd, ſhe would make no further Changes in her *Miniſtry*, ſhe was ſenſible how acceptable her preſent Miniſters were to all her People; but bid me obſerve the Artifice of her new Adviſers. This Declaration was confin'd to *Miniſtry*, and therefore the Letter of her Promiſe was not broke, if ſhe did not turn out *any one of her Cabinet-Council*, or that might properly be call'd a *Miniſter of State*. There was a Latitude left to remove all the Chief Officers that do not come ſtrictly under that denomination, which would ſoon be done, by picking out of the Offices of the chief conſequence, all that are known to be *in the true Intereſt of their Country, and to be the beſt Friends, and moſt faithful to the Chief Miniſters*, without any regard to their having ſerv'd Ill or Well: And when theſe are all remov'd, and others of a quite different *Intereſt* and *Principle* put in their room, in whom *the Miniſters* cannot at all confide, *the Miniſters* may, if they pleaſe, ſtill continue in their Poſts, *Q. A*— has promis'd not to turn them out.

They deſir'd me further to obſerve, that there was no Engagement *not to diſſolve the Parliament*, which was now labour'd Night and Day, and very great hopes given of its being accompliſh'd, or at leaſt that no Inſtances ſhould be able to obtain a Declaration to the contrary: And if the *States General*, foreſeeing of what fatal conſequence a Diſſolution of the Parliament muſt be to the whole Alliance, ſhould repreſent their Apprehenſions upon this Head, tho in a moſt ſubmiſſive manner, they will be told, *They meddle with things that they have nothing to do with*; and there are thoſe who have now Acceſs to *Q*— *A*—, who will ſatisfy her 'tis a Treatment that *She* ought to reſent.

Upon this foot they preſs'd it very home to me, that whether the Parliament be diſſolv'd or not, *the King of France* muſt find his Account in it either way: If it be diſſolv'd, he will immediately have the Satisfaction to ſee all thoſe *Great Men* oblig'd to quit their Employments, who have been the chief Inſtruments of reducing his Power; and if they will quit, who can help it? There is no Breach of Promiſe in that Caſe neither. He knows very well, that thoſe who muſt ſucceed them gave all the Obſtruction they poſſibly could, to the Publick Affairs thro the whole courſe of King *William*'s Reign; that they were againſt entering into this War; that they were ready to acknowledg the Duke of *Anjou* for King of *Spain*; and have, in no Inſtance of their Lives, given him reaſon to think they repent of their good Wiſhes to him.

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If this *Parliament be diſſolv'd*, it muſt be with the proſpect of having a new Parliament of quite another complexion: and what, ſaid they, can *France* wiſh for more? And for this, the *People of England* are prepar'd by Dr. *Sacheverel*. And here they could not forbear expreſſing their Satisfaction at the general Infatuation of the common People, that ſo inconſiderable a Man could do their Cauſe ſo much ſervice; and that a Criminal convicted of the Higheſt Crimes and Miſdemeanours, ſhould be ſuffer'd, in a Country that pretends to any Government, to ride in Triumph thro the Kingdom, to draw in the deluded People to conſent to their own Deſtruction.

But then admitting that the Eyes of the People ſhould be open'd before a new Election, and that a *Parliament* ſhould be choſen contrary to their Expectations; *the French Miniſters* were far from thinking, that *France* would not have been a ſufficient Gainer by the Diſſolution of the *Parliament:* For the common Methods of ſummoning and chuſing *a Parliament*, and their neceſſary Rules and Forms upon firſt Meeting, before they can come to do any Buſineſs, will take up ſo much time, that they did not all queſtion but the *Publick Credit* would have ſuffer'd ſo much, before the Senſe of a new *Parliament* could be known, that the Miſchief to *England* would be irreparable.

The very Thought of deſtroying the *Publick Credit* ſo tranſported them, that they enter'd immediately upon the Advantages that *France* muſt ſurely reap, even altho the *Parliament* ſhould not at laſt be diſſolv'd; and ſo did but ſlightly mention the hopes they had of the great Confuſion that muſt neceſſarily attend a new Election, when the *People* are ſo heated, and the oppoſite *Parties* ſo fir'd and enrag'd one againſt another. But here they had their fears, and were apprehenſive, that *the Hereditary Right* being ſo publickly avow'd and ſo little diſcourag'd, ſome of their well-meaning *Friends* might declare too ſoon, before the *Principal Actors in England* had brought matters to bear, or *the King of France* was in a condition to back the *Pretender* with a ſufficient Force to aſſert *his Hereditary Right*.

But what they chiefly inſiſted upon, and with the greateſt ſatisfaction, was the Scheme that was laid for deſtroying the *Publick Credit in England*; which would make it utterly impoſſible for the *Allies* to carry on the War any longer. They boaſted of certain Aſſurances that were given to *France* either to diſſolve the *Parliament*, or to order it ſo, that all People ſhould expect a Diſſolution; which they flatter themſelves will have the ſame effect. The very Report, they are confident, well manag'd and improv'd by their Friends to the beſt advantage, will ſo far affect the *Publick Credit*, that they expect every day to hear the *Stocks and Fonds* are very conſiderably fall'n, and that *Bank-Stock* will ſoon be above Twenty *per Cent.* worſe than at the beginning of the Year; which may probably end in a Run upon *the Bank*, but will certainly oblige *the Bank* to make ſuch proviſions againſt all Events, that they will be no longer able to ſupply the Neceſſities of the *Government:* and if the faithful Endeavours of *their Friends* do not fail, they are not without hopes, to ſee the Army before the End of this Campaign want their Subſiſtence.

They inſtanc'd in a great many more particulars, and from the whole concluded, that if Mareſchal *Villars* could ſpin out this Campaign without hazarding a *Battel*, and oblige the *Allies* to ſpend this Summer in three or four Sieges; the Advantages that *France* would reap from the Meaſures concerted in *England*, would overballance the Loſs of three or four of their moſt conſiderable Towns.

They fell after this into the Cant of their *Clergy*; "That God, who diſpoſeth the Hearts "of Kings, is doubtleſs preparing ſome ſe-"cret Remedies, or ſome unforeſeen Events; "and that by dividing the Nations who will "have War, he will declare for their Maſter's "Arms, and the juſt Cauſe he defends."

By all therefore, Sir, that I can gather from their Diſcourſe, the *French Miniſters* ſeem to have new Inſtructions, and will talk to you in quite another Language: "That *France* "is not reduc'd ſo low, as to declare what "Security his moſt Chriſtian Majeſty will "give for the Evacuation of *Spain* and the "*Spaniſh Indies*, before they had heard the ut-"moſt Demands of the Allies."

There dropt another thing from them, which ſtill more ſurpriz'd me; That there would come Inſtructions from *England to their Plenipotentiaries, To make uſe of any Expedient, rather than ſuffer the* French *Miniſters to leave Gertruydenberg:* and depending upon this, they will tell you, "That if the Allies deſire they "ſhould go home without entring into any "further Negotiation, they were ready to "be gone as ſoon as a Day ſhould be pre-"ſcrib'd them."

In the mean while they are drawing up a *Manifeſto*, wherein they will lay the whole Blame of breaking the Peace upon the *Engliſh Plenipotentiaries and the Deputies of the States*; and they talk with confidence, that their *Friends in England* are ready to back and ſupport all that they ſhall think fit to publiſh, and to perſuade the *People* rather to believe what *France* ſhall ſay, than depend upon the *Honour, Integrity, and great Abilities of their own Miniſters*.

I have now, Sir, very fully explain'd to you the chief Dependance of *France* at this critical Juncture, and muſt ſubmit it to your Diſcretion to make the beſt uſe you can of it, for the Good of your own Country, without expoſing the Author of your Intelligence to the Reſentment of the *French Miniſters*; which you know will render me for ever incapable of doing the like Service for the future.

I ſhall not pretend to give my Advice; the *States General* are a wiſe People, and very watchful of their own Intereſt: but if they ſhall ſee the Expectations of *France* anſwer'd in moſt particulars, and thoſe Meaſures taken in *England* upon which *France* builds all her Hopes; who can wonder if the *States General* ſhould think it high time *to look after themſelves?*

But ſurely *France* muſt be miſtaken: There cannot be a Set of Men in *England*, who, if they had the Power, would run the riſque of ſacrificing their Country to their own Ambition. The *People of England* are in daily expectation, by a ſafe and honourable Peace, to reap the fruits of ſo much Blood ſpilt, and the many Millions that have been expended: And if they ſhall ſee all at once, *Their beſt Allies ill treated and diſguſted; The Parliament diſſolv'd; A happy and ſucceſsful Miniſtry diſgrac'd, to make room for what no body is yet willing to name; The Publick Credit, from a moſt flouriſhing Condition, reduc'd to the loweſt Ebb; The Properties of many thouſand Perſons concern'd in the Publick Fonds, who have ventur'd their All for the Support of the Government, abated at leaſt one fifth of their preſent Value; The moral Certainty of an advantageous, laſting, and honourable Peace, quite vaniſh'd, and the Nation labouring under the Burden of a War which they are no longer able to ſupport:* The Spirit of the *Engliſh* Nation will awake, and purſue with Vengeance the Authors of ſuch Bold, Deſperate, and Deſtructive Counſels.

I am, &c.

LONDON, Printed in the Year 1710.

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